

JUSTICE MANAGEMENT DIVISION RESPONSE



U.S. Department of Justice

JUL 26 2002

Washington, D.C. 20530

MEMORANDUM TO GUY K. ZIMMERMAN, DIRECTOR
Assistant Inspector General
for Audit

FROM:

Robert F. Diegelman
Acting Assistant Attorney General
for Administration
Justice Management Division

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert F. Diegelman", written over the typed name.

SUBJECT:

The Department of Justice's Control
Over Weapons and Laptop Computers

Thank you for the opportunity to review the audit report on the Department's control over weapons and laptop computers. The recommendations are consistent with our goals of maintaining a high degree of integrity and accuracy in the Department's Personal Property Management Program.

The Facilities and Administrative Services Staff in conjunction with other Justice Management Division staffs is proceeding with corrective actions. Attached is our response to the draft audit report. Additional documentation will be provided to your staff as improvement measures are implemented.

We appreciate the comprehensive analysis of the management and control over laptop computers and weapons and the viable recommendations contained in the report. If your staff requires additional information, please contact Janet Dobbs on (202) 514-6755.

Attachment

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'S CONTROL
OVER WEAPONS AND LAPTOP COMPUTERS

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend that the Assistant Attorney General for Administration (AAG/A), in consultation with the component heads, review the ratios of weapons to agent/officer and determine if the ratios are appropriate and if we should establish a Department guideline.

Response: We accept this recommendation. We will commence a study on the ratios of weapons per agent/officer to determine if there is logical rationale or operational need for a varying number of weapons by component. We anticipate completing the study by February 2003.

2. We recommend that the Assistant Attorney General for Administration (AAG/A) revise the Justice Property Management Regulations (JPMR) to include the requirement for integration or reconciliation of accounting and property systems.

Response: We concur with this recommendation. We will revise the JPMR to include the requirement for integration and reconciliation of the accounting and property management systems. The revision is expected to be completed in October 2002. This requirement has been communicated to the Project Manager Office of the Department's Unified Financial Management Systems Project.

3. We recommend that the AAG/A revise Department level credit card directives to prohibit the purchase of weapons at a local level.

Response: The JMD encourages the use of new technology to include credit card purchases. We are also aware that many vendors cannot provide detailed information on purchases made with credit cards. As an interim, we will prohibit the use of credit cards to purchase weapons at a local level. We will also work with Bank One and the vendors to ensure that we can accurately capture the acquisition of weapons in the future.

4. The AAG/A, in consultation with the component heads, establish and implement standard policy for the security and storage of weapons outside Department facilities, particularly in vehicles.

Response: We agree with this recommendation. The JMD will work with the components to develop a standard policy for securing weapons. We will implement Departmentwide policy by December 2002.

5. The AAG/A revise the controlled personal property definition to include weapons of all types and all items with data storage capability.

Response: We agree with this recommendation and will revise the definition of controlled property to include weapons and items with data storage. We will complete the JPMR revision by September 2002.

6. The AAG/A require components to report their physical inventory activities to the JMD Property Office. Further, the Property Office should be authorized to monitor the submissions and take necessary steps to verify accuracy.

Response: We agree with this recommendation. The JMD Property Office currently is not staffed to handle the requirement to monitor and verify the accuracy of physical inventory activities within the components. We will work within JMD to analyze the number of full-time equivalent personnel required and determine if resources can be made available for this function. With appropriate staffing, we will be able to incorporate the requirement of having the components' report physical inventory activities to the JMD Property Office in the JPMR. We will also develop performance criteria and measurements to ensure the accuracy of future physical inventories.

7. The AAG/A revise physical inventory guidelines to include a requirement that weapons be inventoried at least annually.

Response: We agree with this recommendation and will revise the JPMR to include the requirement that a physical inventory must be conducted on weapons and other sensitive items on an annual basis. We will revise the JPMR by September 2002.

8. The AAG/A encourage the components to use advanced technology in managing property. Further, the Department should explore the USMS scheduling method to determine if more widespread use of the system throughout the Department would improve property management.

Response: We agree with this recommendation and will work with the Department's Chief Information Officer (CIO) to develop the best plan of action to implement technology in managing property. In addition, we will work with the Department's CIO to encourage components to fully implement the technology they have on-board to manage property.

9. The AAG/A, in consultation with the component heads, establish and implement minimum standards for the reporting of lost weapons and laptop computers within the components. The revised policies should address: (1) the timing of the initial loss report, (2) the inclusion of the loss discovery date and the sensitivity of information stored on the lost laptop computers, and (3) reporting weapon and laptop computer losses to NCIC and the timing of such reports.

Response: We agree with this recommendation and will develop and issue Department standards for reporting lost weapons and laptop computers. We expect the policy to be implemented by December 2002.

10. The AAG/A revisit the Department policy for reporting property losses. This should include transferring review responsibility to the JMD Property Office, along with the authority to monitor component submissions for compliance and corrective initiatives.

Response: We agree with the recommendation that we should transfer the review of component property losses to the JMD Property Office. We will determine the impact on the Property Office workload and if additional resources are necessary to handle this responsibility. We expect analysis of the workload and revision of the policy by October 2002.

11. The AAG/A revise the Department policy related to Boards of Survey to ensure that all weapon and laptop computer losses (along with any other types of sensitive property) are referred to the Board for review. Further, the Department should establish a time standard for the initiation of the Board of Survey review.

Response: We concur with this recommendation and will work with the component Property Management Officers to develop the Department's policy and procedures related to Boards of Survey. We expect completion by October 2002.

12. The AAG/A require checklists for separating employees to specifically include sensitive property such as weapons and laptop computers and approval by responsible personnel, such as property and firearms custodians.

Response: We agree with this recommendation and will develop Departmentwide guidance to ensure that we retrieve all property from employees separating service with the Department of Justice. We expect completion of the guidance in January 2003.

13. AAG/A revise the regulation to ensure that steps to remove information from laptop computers are adequately documented.

Response: We agree with this recommendation. The existing policy requires that components remove all sensitive or classified information from computer equipment before disposal. The JMD has developed a Security Inspection and Release Authority Form that will be provided to all components requiring that they document that the equipment has been processed in accordance with existing policy. We will provide this form and accompanying policy to the components prior to January 2003.